

Town of Newfields
First Session of the 2020 Annual Meeting
Deliberative Session Minutes-February 4, 2020

Select Board: Christopher M. Hutchins, James L. Thompson III and Michael C. Sununu

Moderator: Marc Brown

Town Clerk: Sue McKinnon

Moderator Marc Brown called the meeting to order at 7:07pm and called for a pledge of allegiance. He introduced the head table and reviewed the rules and procedures of the meeting.

Article 1. Shall the Town of Newfields raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$1,692,272? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$1,637,246, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Newfields or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Select Board recommends the \$1,692,272 as set forth on said budget. (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Nancy Taylor and seconded by George Bailey to approve Article 1.

Paul Bauer called for discussion. He talked about reinstating curbside recycling and adding the cost of \$47,000 to the operating budget.

Bob Elliot asked how adding the money to the budget is different than the citizens petition to reinstate curbside recycling.

Jamie explained that we would change the budget number by adding \$47,000 and recycling would be part of the budget rather than a separate warrant article.

Jeff Buxton said that he thought a recycling committee was being formed to study the feasibility of curbside recycling and how the town should move forward. Why add \$47,000 to the budget now, when it most likely will not be spent, since it is going to take a while to decide what the town is going to do.

Michael Sununu said the Select Board is continuing to explore recycling options. This one item calculates to a 4.5 percent increase in the tax effort. This was a consideration when the Board decided to terminate curbside recycling. He suggested allowing the town to vote on the petition warrant article and let the townspeople make the decision.

George Bailey clarified that the 4.5 percent increase is on the town portion of the tax rate not on the entire tax bill. The effect on the tax bills will be significantly less than 4.5 percent.

Michael Sununu agreed and added that the SAU portion of the tax rate is going up close to 10 percent.

Julia Kramer stated that it is not guaranteed that the \$47,000 added to the budget would be spent on recycling.

Bobby Kelly added that \$47,000 is a 2.7 percent increase.

Kirstin Johnson made a motion to amend the budget to increase it by \$47,000 to be specifically allocated to curbside recycling. The motion was seconded.

Michael Sununu said an amendment can be made but you cannot make any specific demands on how the money gets spent. The desire for the money to be spent on curbside recycling is the purpose of the Citizens Petition warrant article.

Natalie Fream said that if we amend the operating budget by \$50,000 and we pass the warrant article for \$50,000, we are adding \$100,000 to the budget. Michael agreed.

Marc Brown clarified that the amendment to the budget is voted on now, and then placed on the ballot for a vote.

Jamie Thompson said that if the amendment to the budget passes here tonight, we can zero out the citizens petition.

George Bailey reiterated that the citizen's petition is the only way to guarantee that the \$47,000 will be spent on curbside recycling.

Nancy Taylor asked if we should add some language to Article 1 to make it less confusing. Michael stated that the language in Article 1 is specified in state statute.

Michael Sununu said that the Board has no legal obligation to spend the \$47,000 on recycling. The specific purpose of warrant article 5 is to reinstate curbside recycling.

George Bailey stated that the Select Board can say tonight that they will use the money for recycling, and they can change their minds later. The citizen's petition takes the decision out of the Select Board's hands.

The amendment to add \$47,000 to the operating budget was voted on and failed to pass. Yes-21, No-45.

Karen Nieman asked about the amount of the default budget. Michael Sununu explained that the amount of the default budget is the same as last year with the addition of any contractual obligations

A motion was made and seconded by Natalie Fream to move the article. All were in favor.

Article 1 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 2. To see if the Town of Newfields will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$28,000 to defray the cost of planning for public facilities for development and implementation of an asset management plan for the Newfields Stormwater System and, to authorize the issuance of not more than \$28,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and, further, to authorize the Newfields Select Board to apply for a *Clean*

Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan. Repayment of the loan funds will include up to 100% forgiveness of loan principal in an amount up to \$28,000. Further, to authorize the Newfields Select Board to take all other actions necessary to carry out and complete this project. Recommended by Select Board. (3/5 ballot vote required)

Jamie Thompson explained that this article has been put on the ballot because the Board has applied for and been approved for a grant from the State in the amount of the warrant article. We are one of several communities on the Great Bay that needs to monitor discharge into the bay. Neighboring communities have had to make substantial investments in wastewater treatment. We, as a smaller town are not required to do this. The EPA is more lenient on communities that take actions to mitigate what is going into the bay. This article will be a neutral affect to the budget.

Michael Sununu added that we need to take out a loan for \$28,000 from municipal finance and as long as we use the money appropriately, for stormwater asset management, the loan will be repaid. We take out the loan, spend the money and the loan is extinguished.

Bobbly Kelly asked if the Board had a plan. Michael Sununu replied that they have been working with various organizations and applied for the grant. If the warrant passes, we will put out to the bid the work that is outlined in the grant. The Asset Management Plan will include maps of our stormwater system. If the Town rejects the warrant article, nothing is done.

Gayle Davis asked who the various organizations were. Michael said, the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Water Department and Environmental Consultant Hoyle Tanner.

A motion was made by Bill Meserve and seconded by Natalie Fream to approve Article 2.

Article 2 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 3. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established, for the future purchase of a new fire truck? Recommended by Select Board 3-0. (Majority vote required)

Chris Hutchins stated that the current balance of the fire truck capital reserve fund is \$260,000 and the cost of a new truck is around \$500,000. We are 3-5 years from having to purchase a new truck. Leaving a \$260,000 balance which means that yearly appropriations will need to be increased.

Julie Johnston asked how old the oldest fire truck is and how long they last.

Jamie explained that a requirement of insurance is that the fire equipment meets certain standards. The standard for the primary truck must be within 15 years and if the town meets those standards, insurance rates go down. There is a replacement plan in place so that we can replace equipment and be rated at the highest level we can. One of the challenges we have is that we do not have hydrants throughout the town. Getting the equipment to the highest level we can helps us to respond the best way possible.

Fire Chief Jeff Buxton agreed and added that the oldest truck is 32 years old and they have a 20-year old truck and the newest one is 9 years old. The amount of the warrant article will have to be increased to stay on the 30-year plan. This year the fire department budget increased due to a \$17,000 pump repair. In the next 3-4 years the fire department will be looking to add an addition to the current fire station.

Jessica Kyle asked if the capital reserves were invested. Jamie said the money is held with the Trustees of the Trust Funds and is invested in money market funds.

A motion was made by Michael Price and seconded by Bill Meserve to move the question. All were in favor.

Article 3 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 4. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by Select Board 3-0. (Majority vote required)

Chris Hutchins said the current balance of the capital reserve is \$2,300. The funds are used to purchase equipment the fire department may have.

A motion was made by George Bailey and seconded by Gayle Davis to move the question.

Article 4 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 5. By Citizen's Petition: To see if the Town of Newfields will raise and appropriate up to \$50,000 per year to reinstate curbside recycling. (Majority vote required).

A motion was made by Trish Cox and seconded by Jamie Thompson to amend the warrant article by striking the words, "up to" and "per year" and changing the amount to \$47,000.

George Drinkwater asked why the amount is being changed.

Trish Cox replied that the quote from Waste Management was \$47,000 and when the warrant article was written they only had a rough estimate of \$50,000.

James Valentine is an environmental engineer and spoke in opposition to the warrant article. He is opposed for reasons that may not be apparent. This problem of not knowing what to do with recycling is everywhere. A recent article in the Sunday Globe talked about the increased cost for communities to continue to recycle. Recycling is no longer working because there is no market for the materials. Unfortunately, we are in a situation like other towns where we create huge amounts of material that we intend to recycle and the cost of collecting the material to be recycled is more expensive. He is opposed to putting this warrant article as a means to make us feel better. One of the ways that we can help alleviate this problem is to bring our recycling to Newmarket.

Trish said that 87% of our recycling is being recycled and not going to a landfill. She visited a facility where she saw 60 people sorting plastics to be recycled. There are emerging markets for

recycling and the market changes every day. The Select Board has chosen a company, Waste Management, who will recycle. Reducing waste is our number one answer.

George Bailey said the cost for us to keep curbside recycling is minor. In his opinion, having curbside recycling increases the value of our homes. People will want to live in a town with curbside recycling.

Lois Bailey said we can take our recycling to Newmarket and they are not charging at this point. They are going to start charging us \$5.00 per bin. They will not take cash at the transfer station and tickets will have to be purchased at the Newmarket town office. It will cost each family \$250.00 per year versus \$50.00 per year with curbside recycling. She would rather pay \$50.00 per year than have to drive to Newmarket and pay \$5.00 per bin.

Jacqui Silvani commented that Waste Management recycles 87% of recyclables. Casella only recycles 20%. We are doing better with Waste Management.

Gwen Morgan asked if the cost could end up being more than \$47,000. Jamie said the cost is driven by the amount of recycling collected and it could be more.

Gwen also asked if the recycling committee would be defunct if this article passes. She thought the long-term goal was to reduce and not have to recycle.

Jamie said the idea of passing this \$47,000 would give the recycling committee time to figure out a long-term solution while restoring curbside recycling. We need a long-term solution because costs are only increasing.

Tom Rogers also asked if the cost for recycling could go up. Jamie said that the recycling cost and trash costs are based on volume that we produce and monthly market prices, which vary.

Trish added that the cost is for 9-months.

Michael Sununu stated that if this warrant article passes it is to reinstate curbside recycling for the remainder of the year 2020. We will be under contract.

Bill Meserve asked if recycling will be mandatory. It will not; it has always been an option according to Michael Sununu.

Paul Bauer requested to move the question. The amendment was voted on and passed.

Article 5 as amended will be placed on the ballot.

A motion was made and seconded to restrict reconsideration of the warrant article. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue E. McKinnon

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